

THE USAU YOUTH



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THE FOURTH AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF YOUTH AFFAIRS (COMY IV) 'Africa Deliver as One on Youth Development'

African Ministers in charge of Youth Affairs met from **September 13-15, 2012**, during the fourth African Union Conference of Ministers in Charge of Youth (COMY IV) themed '**Africa, Deliver as One on Youth Development.**' The event, which was hosted at the African Union Commission (AUC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, saw the attendance of a broad list of stakeholders which included representatives of Member States, partners, and African youth leaders.

During this conference, the ministers focused on **youth empowerment and employment** as a follow up to the 2011 Malabo Summit. The Ministers and experts worked through strategies to improve the conditions for young people doing business, create an investment plan for youth employment, as well as guidelines for youth empowerment.

The following three proposals were developed during the course of the workshop:

- Africa needs to **build the capacity and ensure the availability of disaggregated data on the status of youth in Africa**, in-line with the principles of the African Youth Charter for effective planning, budgeting, and advocacy at regional and national levels;
- There is a **need for an inter-ministerial, multi-sectoral, and inter-disciplinary approach to youth development in Africa**. This is imperative to adapt and achieve the Youth Decade Plan of Action targets at regional and national levels; and
- **Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and the AUC need to coordinate their roles, capacity, and involvement** on the implementation, monitoring, and tracking of progress of the Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009 – 2018).



The COMY IV Group Photo

New COMY IV leadership was also chosen during the workshop; and these new bureau members will work to ensure the implementation and adherence to the above proposals over the next two years. The new COMY IV leaders are:

- **Chairperson:** The Republic of Congo
- **1st Vice Chairperson:** The Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- **2nd Vice Chairperson:** The Kingdom of Swaziland
- **3rd Vice Chairperson:** The Republic of Tunisia, and
- **Rapporteur:** The Republic of Rwanda

At the closing ceremony, current AU Commissioner for the Human Resource, Science, and Technology department, **H.E. Jean Pierre Ezin**, congratulated the COMY IV for the results achieved during the workshop. Incoming Chairperson of the COMY IV, **H.E. Makosso Anatole**, representing the Republic of Congo, thanked all of the delegates and encouraged his colleagues to accelerate their efforts for youth development in Africa.

Bari Fanso
Youth Liaison to the African Union
U.S. Mission to the African Union (USAU)

EDITORIAL NOTE

Dear readers,

We are happy to have you with us once more. This month we'll learn about the U.S. Department of State *Young African Leadership Innovation Summit* and how a few participants are intending to use the knowledge they acquired in the U.S. to empower their youth colleagues and friends back on the continent.

I'm genuinely impressed by the work of a young South African lady, **Palesa Shongwe**, who has succeeded in using films that focus on human rights, social development, and xenophobia as a tool for communication and education in Africa. I also had the chance of sitting with **Dr. Ademola Olajide** who is the Head of the Division of Health, Nutrition, and Population at the African Union. Take a look at our conversation on **page 6** and discover Ms. Palesa on **page 3**.

Be ready to learn more about managing diversity in Africa and do not hesitate to share your thoughts with us on Twitter and Facebook.

Dear readers, you are on the verge of some terrific articles ... please, read on.

Fanso Bari
USAU Youth Liaison to the
AU

CAMEROON - YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS - CONNECT ... PRESIDENT OBAMA'S INITIATIVE 'Make Cameroon a Stronger and Better Place for Yourself'

On August 27, 2012, over 50 young entrepreneurs and Cameroonian youth leaders, among them Former participants of President Obama's Forum for Young African Leaders (PFYAL), the U.S. State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), and the Vital Voices training program, attended the Young African Leaders Youth Symposium in Cameroon, under the theme "**Cameroon – Young African Leaders – Connect.**" The U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon, **Ambassador Robert P. Jackson**, Public Affairs Officer, **Mr. Matthew McKeever**, and Cultural Affairs Specialist, **Mrs. Gladys Shang Viban** also participated in the event.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Robert P. Jackson commented that the U.S. Embassy in Cameroon is a partner in youth development. He underscored the importance of civic education, good governance, and economic engagement - emphasizing that the youth should get involved in programs to enhance civic education. He also highlighted the need for youth to coordinate their efforts and applauded the Cameroon Youth Engagement Network (CAMYEN) in its work in encouraging young Cameroonians to run for office during the upcoming legislative and municipal elections.

Following the Ambassador's remarks, event participants held exchanges under the themes of **Youth and Civic Engagement; Youth and Business; Youth and Volunteerism; and Social Media, Communication, and Networking**. These themes were announced by **Mr. Nfinyo Mabu**, a young entrepreneur who called on youth to take a commitment to forge ahead.

Mr. Akere Maimo and **Mr. Eric Sankum** led the discussion on youth and civic engagement. They highlighted the benefits of youth involvement in civic activities through a comparative study of the Cameroonian and American realities, and gave recommendations on the way forward. During the discussion on "Youth and Business", **Mr. Churchill Mambe** stated that small businesses employ more people and pay more taxes, as he also explained the role of the Chamber of Commerce. He closed by imploring young people to "**Think global, and start local.**"

The attendees also had the pleasure of sharing **Ms. Jacqueline Kamsu's** experience as a young businesswoman; her bead making is a skill that started accidentally as a hobby, and is now earning her millions. The rest of the presenters, **Ms. Ayuni Fai** and **Mr. Eugene Nforgwa**, closed by allowing the participants to reflect upon the immense amount of information they had acquired.

The presentations were followed by question and answer (Q&A) sessions with vital input from participants. **Ms. Patience Elango**, who works for the Cameroon Electoral Board, stressed the importance of politics, political science, and a broader knowledge of the country's laws, emphasizing that youth should master the law and engage in elections and politics. Ms. Elango also informed the attendees on the new electoral code, which can be found on www.elec.cm, and advised that documents such as *The Constitution* and *The Electoral Code* should constitute the basis of the engaged youth's "bible," to which **Mrs. Gladys Viban** added that, "**Once you have the facts right, no one can fool around with you.**"

At the end of the event, participants were given certificates of participation by PAO Matthew McKeever, as they renewed their commitments to remaining involved and fully galvanized for the tasks ahead.

Paschal Chem-Langhee,
Communication Officer,
Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP)

MONTHLY PROVERB

'The person who has not traveled widely thinks his or her mother is the only cook.'
East African Proverb

This proverb means that traveling broadens the mind and enlarges one's experiences.

Bari Fanso
USAU Youth Liaison to the African Union

YOUNG AFRICAN INNOVATION LEADERS SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS SPEAK WITH USAU PD OFFICER

On **August 1, 2012**, recent Young African Leaders (YAL) Innovation Summit participants **Ms. Addisalem Tesfaye** and **Mr. Kenneth Oliko** visited the U.S. Mission to the African Union (USAU) to brief USAU Public Diplomacy Officer **Jasmine White** on their experiences during their visit to the United States. The YAL Innovation Summit was held in June 2012 and brought young African entrepreneurs and emerging civil society leaders



Jasmine White, U.S. PD Officer (left), Addisalem Tesfaye (middle), and Kenneth Oliko (right)

from across the continent together for a series of events designed to partner young African innovators with U.S. business and nonprofit professionals in order to build U.S.-Africa ties and cooperation on investment and social responsibility. Apart from the opening session with Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton** in Washington, D.C., Addisalem and Kenneth completed mentoring "internships" in Denver, Colorado and Chicago, Illinois.

Ms. Addisalem Tesfaye currently serves as a consultant with SODNET, on their Huduma initiative, a civil society organization focused on providing a model for open governance, allowing for transparency and accountability on the provision of services to various communities across Africa. In her capacity, Addisalem assesses the feasibility of using ICTs to promote citizen feedback on public service delivery in Ethiopia. While in Denver, Addisalem interned with the Open Government Institute of Colorado, a non-partisan organization that **"rallies around ideas and not people,"** in their work to create a more clean and transparent government. She was introduced to various political ideologies and viewpoints surrounding the upcoming presidential elections in the United States and was also able to present Huduma and discuss how crowd sourcing can be harnessed in the relationship between people and service delivering entities.

Mr. Kenneth Oliko, on his part, commented that through his experience in the YAL program, the "U.S. gets it" in their consistent outreach with African youth. Currently, Kenneth works as a Communication and Advocacy Associate in the African Union (AU) Department of Social Affairs. Over the course of his internship in Chicago, Kenneth was introduced to many African-American traditions and was also able to share information about his home country of Nigeria. His work centered on engaging young people and he had the opportunity to work with three different after-school and neighborhood youth organizations. Kenneth, who owns his own public relations firm in Nigeria, was also able to consult with a public relations firm in Chicago to solicit guidance in his aim to move forward with his work surrounding political campaigns and outreach in Nigeria. Overall, he commented that **he was pleased to see so many of his colleagues from across the African continent doing so much with the limited resources many of them are given.**

Both participants will work with USAU to use their newly acquired knowledge to organize an outreach project, in which they will share their YAL experiences and help get other youth leaders in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the AU connected to individuals and organizations interested in working with them.

Lina Mohammed
Public Diplomacy Assistant
U.S. Mission to the African Union (USAU)

UNSUNG YOUTH HERO - PALESA SHONGWE

South African filmmaker **Palesa Shongwe** believes that economically marginalized Africans are isolated from the world, and from each other, by severely limited access to media sources and information technology - and she is determined to change that.

Shongwe, 31, has produced award-winning documentaries that focus on human rights, social development, and xenophobia in her native country. In 2009, she directed and edited *Our Broken Dreams*, a short documentary about the plight of unaccompanied migrant children in southern Africa. She also helps organize the Tri-Continental Film Festival, based in South Africa, and has received numerous accolades for her work on television documentaries.

According to Shongwe, using film as a tool for communication and education is especially important in Africa, where literacy levels are generally low, access to education is inadequate, and employment opportunities - especially for women - are too often unavailable. She believes that **there are no easy solutions to social and economic challenges, but one of the most important steps is realizing that many hands make lighter work.**

Shongwe does not underestimate the scale of her task and hopes to connect and create relationships with people who can help inform and broaden her influence in the area of access to information in South Africa and on the continent.

Shongwe wishes that focus be placed on access to information and better education. She believes that Africa needs more direct partnerships that can facilitate IT's movement away from a dependence on imported media, while strengthening and diversifying its own media outlets. She is interested in learning more about what Africa can learn from the U.S. in matters such as access to information and the features of information technology.

Read more: <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/mobile/2010/08/20100802110406sjro0.3218958.html#axzz28zXgcmRY>

DISCLAIMER: The following information has been sourced from the U.S. Department of State



Palesa Shongwe:
An award-winning filmmaker

DID YOU KNOW? ... LET'S DISCUSS ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

(Managing Diversity in Africa)

The word diversity is often used to refer to people. It refers to human attributes that are different from your own and from those groups to which you belong. There are two main types of diversity - **ascriptive diversities** which are inherited like culture, sex, and ethnicities; and **non-ascriptive diversities** which are those differences that are not difficult to change. Such as religion, nationality, sexuality, politics, and language.

Diversity is what we make of it. It can enrich lives, helps to promote tourism, and contributes to some extent, through inter-ethnic marriages, to the survival of many groups. However, if not properly respected, the diversity we value can lead to violence.

Africa is a very diverse continent, and the differences range from culture, language, and religion to name a few. The continent has over 3315 ethnic groups; these different groups of people practice Christianity, Islam, Bahá'í, Judaism, Hinduism, African traditional religions, atheism, and even syncretism. The linguistic diversity includes English, French, Arabic, Portuguese, and Spanish, not accounting for the traditional and local languages found throughout the continent.

In fact, Africa is so diverse that some experts are of the opinion that diversity is the cause of the continent's numerous conflicts. This is evident in the fact that in 2011, there were 26 armed conflicts reported worldwide – 18 of these conflicts are still ongoing in Africa, making the continent victim to about half of the world's conflicts. Moreover, some of history's biggest crimes against humanity have been committed within groups on the African continent such as the Rwandan (Hutu and Tutsi) Genocide, and recent incidences of xenophobia in South Africa and South Sudan.

Please tell us what you think Africa can do to better manage its inherent diversity, while also working to decrease the incidences of violence? Don't miss the fun on our facebook and twitter!

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Did-You-Know-Le-Saviez-Vous/181760325263595>

And

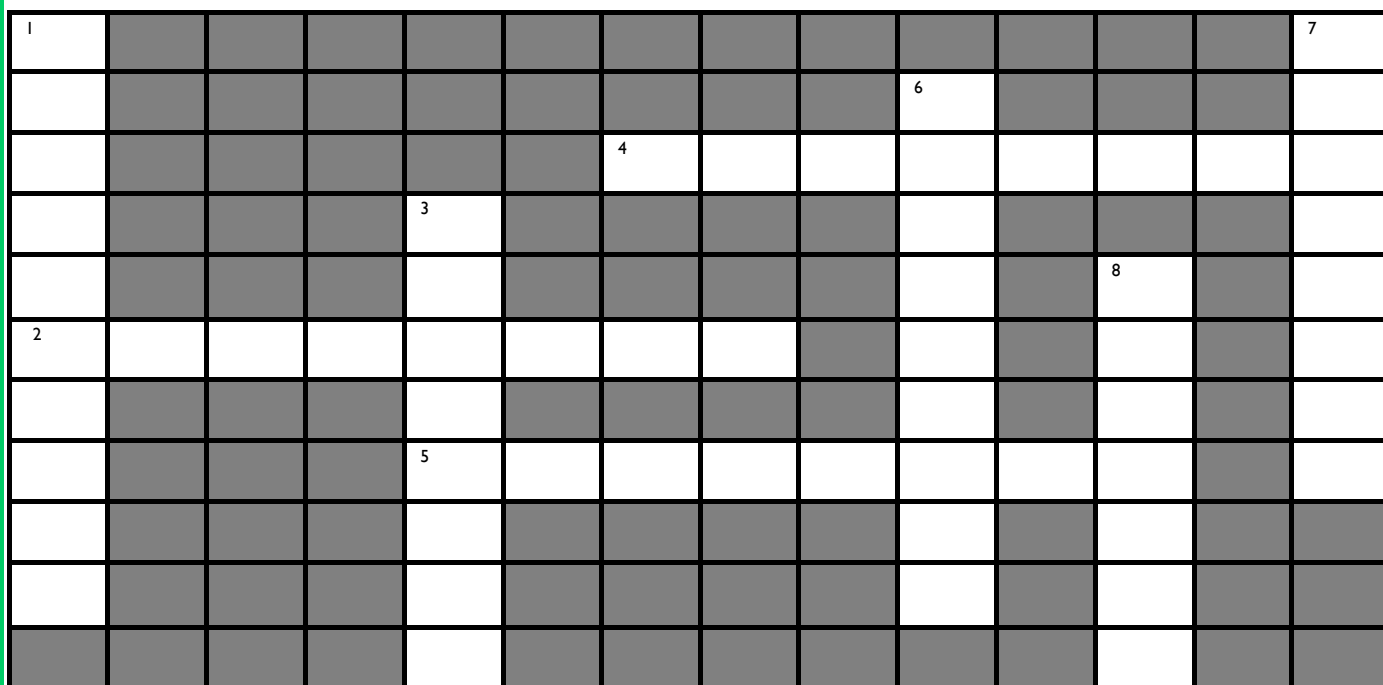
Twitter: [US_AU](#)

The following information has been sourced from the African Center for Peace and Security Training.

For more click on <http://www.issafrica.org/eventitem.php?EID=812>

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Read through our articles on our *'Did You know? ... Let's Discuss on Facebook and Twitter'* column in order to



ACROSS

- 2. The quality of being humane and benevolent
- 4. A set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs
- 5. A state of open, often prolonged fighting; a battle or war

DOWN

- 1. Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign
- 3. The deliberate and systematic extermination of a national, racial, political, or cultural group
- 6. Human attributes that are different from your own and from those groups to which you belong
- 7. A body of words and the systems for their use common to a people who are of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural tradition
- 8. Inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, of a group of people which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group

ANSWERS: DOWN
ACROSS
1. Xenophobia
2. Humanity
3. Genocide
4. Religion
5. Conflict
6. Diversity
7. Language
8. Culture

SUDOKU PUZZLE

THE NEW PUZZLE - OCTOBER

3		1	8		7	4	9	
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		9	4	6		5	7	3

ANSWERS FOR SEPTEMBER PUZZLE

8	1	3	4	6	9	2	7	5
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7	4	5	6	2	8	1	9	3
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2	7	9	8	4	6	5	3	1

A WORD TO THE WISE - DR. ADEMOLA OLAJIDE

Dr. Ademola Olajide is the Head of the Health, Nutrition, and Population Division at the African Union. We had the chance to talk with him on the link between health, African youth, and the continent's development. This is what he had to say.

The USAU Youth: Thank you Dr. Ademola for having us here today. Can you tell us how important health issues are to lives of African youth, and the impact of these issues on the continent's development?

Dr. Ademola Olajide: When people talk of the youth population in any country or continent, they talk about a largely reproductive and agile population that can contribute to a nation's development and growth. They are also the strategic population upon which countries and continents can invest for the future. This means the youth are a critical mass of human capital for Africa's development. If their health is compromised, the quality of human capital will also be compromised and that will affect all efforts by Member States to drive economic growth, both in the short run and in the long run.

There are a range of challenges that directly affect young people, chief among them is sexual reproductive health. In it you've got issues of HIV/AIDS and issues of early pregnancies, which will result in increased instances of school dropouts, thereby reducing the potential future economic capacity and earnings. In addition, you have a range of STIs (sexually transmitted infections) that also contribute to poor health and, to some extent, also contribute to the reduction of the overall quality of human capacity.

So in a few words, once you compromise the health of the young, you compromise the capacity of a country to build a critical mass of quality human capital to drive development in the long run; you ultimately reduce the capacity of that country or continent to harness a demographic dividend, which Africa has at this point and can effectively use to stimulate development. A demographic dividend is the rise in the rate of economic growth due to a rise in the working age population – and that population in Africa is seen in the large number of young people, relative to the other members of the population, in which the government can invest in critical policies of education, health, and skills development. The profile of Africa's population is just like that of Asia at the time when they were driving their economic growth. It is



Dr. ADEMOLA OLAJIDE
Head of the AU Health, Nutrition,
and Population Division

important at this point that Africa also undertakes effective policies to improve youth health and other social issues that can help stimulate development on the continent.

The USAU Youth: Are there any ways you think Africa can use its youth to improve the overall health of its citizens?

Dr. Ademola Olajide: Some of the challenges that confront Africa with regard to health are challenges that are caused by the inadequacy of human resources for health. Africa needs auxiliary health workers or power professionals to bridge the access gap that exists in regards to critical human resources for health. Young people can be trained to fill this gap because these are people who are agile, creative, quick and willing to learn, they are also very mobile.

While volunteering, they can be trained to **assist communities in providing critical health and information services**. It does not necessarily need to be technical assistance; it could be the provision of information that improves the community's knowledge to undertake health promoting and health seeking behavior. Young people can also **offer critical health services like immunizations**, which also do not require technical knowledge. They can also **gather data, update information and records, or deliver services to communities** for a fixed period of time, while empowering the community to take ownership of their own health. The young people can serve as **vehicles and agents of change**. When a young person is trained in school on health, that does not only enhance his or her health but that also creates an agent of change who goes back into his or her home and community to tell others how things should be done.

Young people are therefore that group of people who can disseminate health information and improve the knowledge, attitude, and practices of people, which will ultimately contribute to expanded health outputs on the continent.

The USAU Youth: I understand that your division is working with a few African Union Youth Volunteers (AU-YVs) in the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal, Newborn, and Child Mortality in Africa (CARMMA). Can you share with us a few of the improvements and innovations that have been introduced by these CARMMA youth volunteers?

Dr. Ademola Olajide: CARMMA like you know is the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa; however, we have included newborn and child health in this campaign as well.

The presence of young volunteers in our institution has allowed us, among others, to be able to **track the progress made on the continent by Member States** in the implementation of the CARMMA program. We are now able to monitor and follow up to ensure that they are implementing the program according to the national strategies that they had laid out. Above all, the volunteers have greatly helped with the **communication wing**. They have introduced innovative ways of communicating the CARMMA message, which have broadened the output of our objectives and introduced communication tools like the CARMMA quarterly magazine. They have also created the CARMMA website, which will be launched soon, and we are sure that once this is done we'll be able to reach a larger audience and move a little more toward positive policy development with respect to program implementation. It is also our hope that this will ultimately contribute to the reduction of maternal, newborn, and child mortality in Africa.

These were things that we might not have been able to achieve if we didn't have the young volunteers to move this project forward.

The USAU Youth: At the end of each interview we have a question called 'A Word to the Wise.' What piece of advice can you give young Africans who want to listen and learn from you?

Dr. Ademola Olajide: Failure is not a single event; we do not fail overnight. Failure is repeated errors of judgment done every day; it is a gradual process that does not happen suddenly. The same applies to people who succeed; their success grows on a daily, progressive basis.

Young people therefore have the opportunity to progressively avoid the mistakes of their elders and improve on the opportunities and the positive actions of those who have succeeded before them. They still have the whole future ahead of them and it is important that they live their lives in such a way that they don't look back with regret.

The USAU Youth: It has been our honor to talk to you today. Thank you.

Dr. Ademola Olajide: You're welcome.

“Young people ... have the opportunity to progressively avoid the mistakes of their elders and improve on the opportunities and the positive actions of those who have succeeded before them.”

THE VOICE OF VOLUNTEERS - BARI FANSO

After having broadly worked on promoting youth issues in Cameroon, I was eager to broaden my horizons. I didn't know what to expect when I got to Addis Ababa, but I was sure about one thing – I was ready to spread my wings and fly in whichever direction the wind blew.



Bari Fanzo
USAU Youth Liaison to the AU
(2011–2012)

The first emotion I felt when I arrived Addis Ababa was fear. I didn't really know the people I was going to meet or if the work I was going to do would please them. The African Union had deployed me to work with the U.S. Mission to the African Union (USAU), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the African Union (AU); three big organizations – the pressure was high. Fortunately, I met a very wonderful group of people in my colleagues, who probably knew I felt like a fish out of water and did everything to make me as comfortable as possible.

Ethiopia is at a higher altitude than Cameroon, and sometimes it gets much colder than a western or central African youth could bear. However, there's more to the land of thirteen months of sunshine – the people are friendly, generally curious, and so traditional – that includes culture and religion. There are wonderful places to visit and so many good restaurants.

As the USAU Youth Liaison to the AU, it was my duty to reach out to young Africans - motivate them, share experiences with them, and bring U.S. and AU senior officials close to them, so that the youth could begin to relate with these officials and their individual experiences; and, in turn, start believing that no matter what background they (the youth) come from, they can make a change and, most of all, be

great people in their communities, countries, and in the world. On a smaller scale, I also worked on AU youth policies and activities in Africa, proposing recommendations on how USAID and the U.S. Department of State could partner with the AU to improve the social, economic, and political conditions of African youth.

I am so grateful for the opportunity I've had to work with the American people. No one ever leaves an American institution without a few lessons learned. Here are some I'll share with you:

Welcome constructive criticisms and the opportunities they bring: Constructive criticisms could be your biggest potential for improvement;

Be confident about the work you do, get the work done, and have a great time doing it: The way you feel about the work you do reflects in the quality of your output;

Let go of negative thoughts about how difficult, frustrating, unfair, or inconvenient things are and just allow your best efforts to flow: Sometimes we experience hurdles at work, there's more to gain in using the challenges to get better than being bitter; and finally

Always have a dream and hold on to it: No matter how big your dreams are, believe in them and work toward achieving them. Your dreams are like your children and will always be the reason for you to look forward to another day.

As sad as it may be, one year is up and it's time for me to go. It was an absolute pleasure engaging with you through our favorite newsletter. I hold on to all I have learned from you, and because of the wonderful things you do, I can confidently say I am proud to be an African youth. Goodbye friends.

*“Be
confident
about
the work
you do,
get the
work done,
and
have a
great
time
doing it.”*

Bari Fanzo
African Union Youth Volunteer
USAU Youth Liaison to the African Union
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

U.S. MISSION TO THE AFRICAN UNION

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www.usau.usmission.gov

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The USAU Youth thanks all the readers who sent in articles for this month's edition. Please keep sending in the articles, announcements, and information on any subject matter you would like to see in subsequent editions of the newsletter to USAUyouth@state.gov. Kindly share with us activities and pictures of what you or your country is doing in relation to youth empowerment in Africa. Thank you.

NOTIFICATION:

KINDLY TAKE THE TIME TO FILL OUT ALL THE REQUIREMENTS UPON SUBSCRIPTION. WE WILL BE UNABLE TO SEND YOU A COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER IF YOUR DATA IS INCOMPLETE.

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